

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS  
HOUSTON DIVISION

United States Courts  
Southern District of Texas  
FILED

MAR 06 2020

David J. Bradley, Clerk of Court

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

vs.

RAPHAEL RISHER  
Defendant

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§

CRIMINAL NO.

20-156

CRIMINAL INFORMATION

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY CHARGES THAT:

COUNT ONE

**Conspiracy to Commit Murder for Hire**  
**18 U.S.C. § 1958**

Between in or about April 2014 until on or about July 1, 2014, in Houston, Texas, in the Southern District of Texas, defendant **RAPHAEL RISHER** did conspire with others, known and unknown, to the United States Attorney to use or cause another to use facilities of interstate or foreign commerce, including, but not limited to, automobiles, firearms and cellular telephones, with the intent that a murder be committed in violation of the laws of the State of Texas and of the United States as consideration for the receipt of, or as consideration of a promise or agreement to pay, anything of pecuniary value, resulting in the death of Marcus Celestine, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1958.

### **OBJECT OF THE CONSPIRACY**

The purpose and object of the conspiracy was to commit the murder of Marcus Celestine, as punishment for Marcus Celestine stealing drugs, including cocaine, and/or monies gained from the sale of cocaine from co-conspirator and leader of the organization, Ronald Brown ("Brown").

### **WAYS, MANNER AND MEANS OF THE CONSPIRACY**

The manner and means by which the foregoing objectives of the conspiracy to commit murder-for-hire were to be accomplished included, but were not limited to, the following:

1. It was part of the conspiracy that Brown combined, conspired, and contracted with defendant RISHER and others to cause the death of Marcus Celestine by forming a plan whereby defendant RISHER arranged with Brown to use another person to murder Marcus Celestine by shooting him with a firearm provided by Brown.
2. It was part of the conspiracy that Brown arranged for the time, place, and cause of the death of Marcus Celestine, as well as the role that Brown, defendant RISHER, and others would play in accomplishing the purposes of the conspiracy.
3. It was further part of the conspiracy that Brown agreed to pay defendant RISHER and another person at least \$20,000.00 of U.S. currency, as payment for carrying out the murder of Marcus Celestine.
4. It was further part of the conspiracy that Brown, defendant RISHER, and other conspirators used interstate commerce and facilities, including telephones, to communicate with one another and to coordinate the details and plans for the murder of Marcus Celestine.

5. It was further part of the conspiracy that Brown, defendant RISHER, and other conspirators used interstate commerce and automobiles to travel on interstate and other public roadways to meetings to discuss the murder-for-hire plan and used automobiles on interstate and other public roadways to travel to the location of the murder of Marcus Celestine.

6. It was further part of the conspiracy that Brown traveled from Atlanta, Georgia to Houston, Texas, when he became aware that Marcus Celestine and another person in the interstate drug conspiracy were involved in the robbery of cocaine from Brown's drug transporter in Houston. Brown traveled in interstate commerce, specifically using an interstate commercial airline flight to return to Houston, to begin to plan the subsequent attack on Marcus Celestine.

7. It was further part of the conspiracy that Brown arranged for defendant RISHER to have another person use as the murder weapon a firearm possessed by Brown that traveled in interstate commerce. Brown supplied defendant RISHER with the FN firearm used to kill Marcus Celestine.

#### **OVERT ACTS**

In furtherance of the conspiracy and to accomplish one or more of the purposes thereof, the following overt acts, among others, were committed in the Southern District of Texas and elsewhere:

1. From in or about 2012 until in or about 2016, Brown ran an interstate drug organization that purchased multiple kilogram quantities of cocaine, a Schedule II controlled substance, and distributed the cocaine in Houston, in the Southern District of Texas, and elsewhere, including Atlanta, Georgia. The total amount of cocaine distributed by the organization at the direction and control of Brown was well in excess

of 5 kilograms or more of cocaine and was, in fact, in excess of 100 kilograms of cocaine.

2. In or about mid-April 2014, codefendant David Roberts (“Roberts”) was planning on taking a shipment of multiple kilograms of cocaine from Houston to Atlanta on behalf of Brown. When Roberts received two large duffel bags filled with kilograms of cocaine from E.W. (a co-conspirator of Brown in Houston), Roberts was robbed by another man, later identified by Brown to be Marcus Celestine.

3. In or about late April 2014, Brown concluded that E.W. and Marcus Celestine stole the multiple kilograms of cocaine from Roberts and Brown began to assemble a plan to kill both men for stealing Brown’s cocaine.

4. On or about April 23, 2014, at 9715 Bertwood Street, Houston, Texas, Brown and other conspirators kidnapped E.W. by using zip ties to bind E.W.’s hands and feet and put him in the trunk of a vehicle to be driven to another location where he was to be assaulted and murdered. While being transported in the trunk of the vehicle, E.W. broke free of the bindings, jumped out of the trunk of the vehicle, and ran down Tidwell, a public roadway in Houston, Texas, seeking assistance. R.G., an unrelated passerby driving another vehicle on Tidwell, saw E.W. in the street and picked up E.W. in R.G.’s vehicle in hopes of transporting E.W. to safety.

5. Brown and another person pursued the vehicle driven by R.G. Brown repeatedly fired a firearm at R.G. and E.W. from a short distance, striking R.G. in the upper body and E.W. in the head. Both men survived the attempted deadly assault.

6. After his failed attempt to kill E.W., Brown turned his attention to killing Marcus Celestine.

7. In or about May and June 2014, Brown met with co-conspirator **RAPHAEL RISHER** ("**RISHER**") and several members of his drug organization at several locations within the Southern District of Texas, to further discuss the murder of Marcus Celestine.

8. **RISHER** advised Brown about his friend Clyde Williams ("Williams") and agreed to broker a deal to have Williams murder Marcus Celestine. Brown agreed to pay Williams at least \$20,000 in United States currency to carry out the murder.

9. In or about June 2014, **RISHER** met with Williams to discuss killing Marcus Celestine. **RISHER** explained that Brown believed Celestine stole drugs from him and wanted him killed as retribution. **RISHER** further explained to Williams that Brown had been trying to catch up with Celestine for a couple of months and could not find where he lived. Williams agreed to carry out the job for at least \$20,000.

10. In or about June 2014, Brown provided an FN handgun, a firearm manufactured outside the State of Texas, to **RISHER** to be used by Williams to murder Marcus Celestine.

11. On or about June 10, 2014, Brown contacted his Parole Officer, J.W., to inquire about the date, time, and location of Marcus Celestine's next appointment with the Office of Probation and Parole. Although unauthorized to do so, J.W. told Brown that Marcus Celestine was scheduled to meet with his Parole Officer at the Houston One District Parole Office located at 4949 West 34<sup>th</sup> Street, Houston, Texas, in the Southern District of Texas, on the morning of July 1, 2014.

12. In or about late June 2014, Brown informed **RISHER** of Celestine's parole meeting on or about July 1, 2014, and **RISHER** passed the information to Williams.

13. On or about July 1, 2014, according to the plan created by Brown, Williams drove a Ford Taurus to the Houston One District Parole Office located at 4949 West 34<sup>th</sup> Street, Houston, Texas, in the Southern District of Texas, to shoot and kill Marcus Celestine with the FN handgun provided by Brown to **RISHER** who gave it to Williams.

14. After Celestine returned to his vehicle following his meeting at the Parole Office, Williams repeatedly shot and killed Marcus Celestine. Williams fired a number of shots at Marcus Celestine, as Celestine sat in the driver's seat of his vehicle.

Williams walked away but quickly returned and fired several more shots at Marcus Celestine from a close range. Marcus Celestine died on the scene in the parking lot of the Parole Office from multiple gunshot wounds.

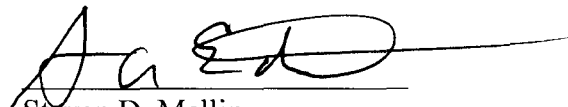
15. The police recovered at least nine (9) shell casings on the scene. An autopsy determined that the cause of Marcus Celestine's death was multiple gunshot wounds and the manner of death was homicide.

16. On or about July 1, 2014, after the murder, **RISHER** and Williams met Brown, at a location on Highway 6 in the Southern District of Texas, where Brown provided Williams approximately \$20,000.00 in U. S. currency for carrying out the murder of Marcus Celestine.

In violation of Conspiracy to Commit Murder for Hire, 18 U.S.C. § 1958.

RYAN K. PATRICK  
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BY:

  
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